

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2180

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 5594

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: SOVIET LINE AT CSCE

REF: GENEVA 4683 NOTAL

GENEVA 5044 NOTAL

1. SUMMARY. IN WEEKEND CONVERSATION WITH BOSTER, SOVIET AMBASSADOR MENDELEVICH DEPLORED WESTERN INSISTENCE ON DEALING WITH SPECIFIC QUESTIONS IN HUMAN CONTACTS AREA BEFORE AGREEING ON GOVERNING PRINCIPLES (ACCUSING SOME DELEGATIONS OF "SABOTAGE" IN THIS CONNECTION BUT EXEMPTING US DEL FROM THIS CHARGE). HE AGAIN HELD OUT PROMISE OF SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS BY SOVIET UNION IF WE CAN MEET THEIR ESSENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS, INDICATING THAT POST-HELSINKI REFLECTION IN MOSCOW HAD LED TO MORE FORTHCOMING SOVIET POSITION, OF WHICH CESSATION OF JAMMING, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS EARNEST OF THEIR INTENTIONS. HE ASKED FOR CONTINUATION OF GOOD INFORMAL CONTACTS WHICH SOV DEL HAD ENJOYED WITH VEST. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN CONVERSATION AT DINNER OCT 19 AT CANADIAN AMBASSADOR

SHENSTONE'S, SOVIET AMBASSADOR MENDELEVICH MADE FOLLOWING POINTS TO BOSTER, ELABORATING ON SOME OF POINTS HE AND SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KOVALEV HAD MADE TO VEST SEPT 21 (GENEVA'S 5044). THERE WERE, HE SAID, CERTAIN DELEGATIONS WHICH WERE TRYING TO SABOTAGE THE WORK IN THE THIRD BASKET. (SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS SUGGESTED HE PARTICULARLY INCLUDED THE BRITISH AMONG THESE DELEGATIONS.) THE US DELEGATION WAS NOT PARTICULARLY ACTIVE IN THIS SABOTAGE BUT WAS IN SYMPATHY WITH IT. THESE DELEGATIONS INSISTED ON CONCENTRATING ON THE "DETAILS" IN THE THIRD BASKET WITHOUT ALLOWING PARALLEL PROGRESS ON THE "PRINCIPLES". IF THE SOVIET DELEGATION FELT ASSURED ABOUT THE PRINCIPLES WHICH WOULD BE MUTUALLY AGREED TO GOVERN THE DETAILS, THEN THEY WOULD BE FORTHCOMING ON THE DETAILS. THE PRINCIPLES THEY WANT ASSURANCE ON ARE "SOVEREIGN RIGHTS", "NON-INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS" AND "RESPECT FOR EACH STATE'S LAWS AND CUSTOMS". THEY HAD ALREADY SIGNALLED THEIR READINESS TO MOVE IMPORTANTLY IN THIS REGARD BY TAKING TWO STEPS. FIRST, THEY HAD TAKEN THE ACTION ON RADIOS THAT WE WOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH (CESSATION OF JAMMING) AND SECOND, THEY HAD SIGNED THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. HE ADDED SIGNIFICANTLY THAT THE SOVIET DELEGATION WAS NOT PREPARED TO MOVE FURTHER IN THIS RESPECT THAN IT HAD BEEN AT HELSINKI. EVEN THERE THEY HAD BEEN PREPARED TO GO A CERTAIN DISTANCE BUT THERE HAD BEEN RE-CONSIDERATION IN MOSCOW THIS SUMMER AND THEY WERE NOW PREPARED TO GO FURTHER. MENDELEVICH ADDED IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE WEST ALWAYS WANTED THE SOVIET UNION TO MAKE A "JUMP" IN THIS AREA. WE SHOULD REALIZE THAT WE COULD NOT MAKE THEM "JUMP" AND THAT IT WAS MORE REALISTIC TO WORK FOR GRADUAL PROGRESS.

3. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR SHENSTONE, WHO JOINED CONVERSATION AT ONE POINT, CHIDED MENDELEVICH FOR THE SOVIET DELEGATION'S RETREAT TO THE POSTURES OF HELSINKI, DWELLING AGAIN ON ARGUMENTS WHICH WE HAD THOUGHT WERE BEHIND US. MENDELEVICH ACKNOWLEDGED THERE WAS SOME TRUTH IN THIS. HE SAID THAT THE WORK OF PHASE II, HOWEVER, HAD NOT REALLY BEGUN YET. AT THE MOMENT, WE WERE LIKE TWO WRESTLERS CIRCLING EACH OTHER IN THE RING. WE WOULD PROBABLY COME TO GRIPS IN NOVEMBER. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAD ACCOMPLISHED TWO THINGS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE FIRST MONTH: WE HAD PUT PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS BEHIND US AND BEGUN TO "CHEW ON THE MEAT" OF OUR PROBLEMS.

4. MENDELEVICH TOLD BOSTER AT CONCLUSION OF THEIR CONVERSATION THAT SOV DEL WILL WANT TO MAINTAIN SAME INFORMAL CONTACTS THEY HAD WITH VEST AND SUGGESTED THAT A GET-TOGETHER THIS WEEK WAS INDICATED. BOSTER SAID WE HAD VISITORS THIS WEEK BUT SAID HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH.

5. COMMENT: MENDELEVICH'S REMARKS REPRESENT INTERESTING ELABORATION OF EARLIER SOVIET COMMENTS CONCERNING USSR INTENTIONS AND STRATEGY IN COMMITTEE III. HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH BRITISH (AMONG OTHERS, PRESUMABLY INCLUDING THE DUTCH) PROBABLY REFLECTS UK INSISTENCE TO DATE ON MEANINGFUL PROGRESS IN THE WORK OF THE SUBCOMMITTEES BEFORE INITIATING DISCUSSION IN FULL COMMITTEE ON BASIC "PRINCIPLES." BRITISH HAVE ALSO TAKEN THE LEAD FOR THE EEC NINE IN THE HIGHLY SENSITIVE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INFORMATION. COMPROMISE PUSHED BY SWISS ON THIS ISSUE NOW EMERGING, UNDER WHICH DISCUSSION OF PRINCIPLES IN COMMITTEE III WOULD TAKE PLACE SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH INITIATION OF MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE IN SUBCOMMITTEES ON SPECIFIC PROPOSALS TABLED BY WESTERN DELEGATIONS. WE NOTE THAT AMONG PRINCIPLES SOVIETS WANT ASSURANCES ON, MENDELEVICH HAS AGAIN INCLUDED RESPECT FOR EACH STATE'S "LAWS AND CUSTOMS" IN ADDITION TO USUAL LIST OF "RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGN RIGHTS" AND "NON-INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS". HE IS THUS ECHOING LINE TAKEN MOST RECENTLY BY GDR REPRESENTATIVE AT OCTOBER 19 MEETING OF COMMITTEE III. SEVERAL WESTERN DELEGATES (INCLUDING FRG) HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER IMPLICATIONS OF ASSURANCES IN BROAD AREA OF "CUSTOMS AND USAGES", WHICH WOULD GIVE SOVIET BLOC A SWEEPING ESCAPE CLAUSE OVER ALMOST ANY PROPOSAL DESIGNED TO EXPAND EXCHANGES AND CONTACTS. THUS, EVEN IF SWISS COMPROMISE DESCRIBED ABOVE IS ADOPTED (AND PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT IT WILL BE), IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW EFFECTIVE WEST WILL BE IN MAKING GENUINE PROGRESS IN THIS IMPORTANT AREA. BASSIN

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